



Regional Water in Montana

Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation

Congressional Appropriations-FFY08

When Congress returned after Labor Day from its month-long late summer break, a House-Senate Conference Committee faced the necessity for compromise. For two of Montana's regional water systems, this is a question of millions of dollars, to be passed through the Bureau of Reclamation's budget to fund construction on the Fort Peck-Dry Prairie (FP-DP) and the Rocky Boy's-North Central (RB-NC) projects.

For FP-DP, the amount will most likely be somewhere between the \$4.2 million marked up in the House sub-committee, and the \$10 million designated by their counterparts in the Senate. If the action in past years can be used as guide, the Fort Peck Tribes and Dry Prairie will split about \$7 million. The project sponsors'

request for FY08 was \$20 million.

RB-NC is coming off a very frustrating year. Under the Continuing Resolution, in which they had indications they could be funded at the same level as FY06, instead saw

receipt of \$800,000 for FY 07, after having requested \$32 million.

Adding to that is an inability to determine what might be characterized as the Federal government's "reasonable range of expectations." Given the need for a large infusion of funds to construct the water treatment plant for the system, and the extent of under-appropriation since authorization, the sponsors initially asked for \$64 million, but halved



Congress returned from its August recess with much FY 08 business left to address.

that to \$32 million when the Federal Office of Management & Budget (OMB) insisted on a reduction. OMB then recommended no funding for the system in the FY 08 Executive budget. The House marked up \$5 million for the project, and the Senate \$6 million. It is expected that Congress will approve an amount somewhere in that range.

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Special points of interest:

- *Congressional Appropriations coming for Authorized Systems*
- *Updates from all 4 Regional Water Authorities*
- *Tribal Systems Activities*
- *Regional Authority meeting dates*

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2007 Montana Legislative Action

-Four Regional Water Authorities received the funds they requested through the Governor's budget. Approved by the Legislature, the support originates from the Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP) Regional Water Fund, and amounts to a total of \$1.086 million for the 08-09 Biennium.

-House Bill (HB) 512 authorized DNRC to contract for up to \$6.6 million in construction project costs during the Biennium; HB 8 granted authority for issuance of up to \$15.4 million in coal severance tax bonds. Both of these rely heavily upon availability of interest earned from the TSEP regional water account.

-Dry Prairie requested legislation which simplifies recording of easements across State Lands. The bill was passed by the Legislature.

-House Joint Resolution 40 requested the U.S. Congress support higher levels of funding from the federal government for both the FP-DP and the RB-NC projects.



Fort Peck Reservation Regional Water

Work is proceeding on construction of the clear well facility and the washwater recovery basin at the Fort Peck Tribes' Water Treatment Plant (WTP) location (northwest of the intersection of US Hwy 2 and Montana Hwy 13, six miles east of Wolf Point.) Apollo Construction of Kennewick, WA is the contractor for these two phases. US Senator Jon Tester paid the site a visit in late August to observe progress on these phases of construction of the approximate 15 million-gallon-per-day plant.

Apollo began building concrete forms for these facilities in September, and, according to officials at the Montana Area Office (MTAO)

of the Bureau of Reclamation, pouring of concrete is expected to begin by the end of October. Projected date of completion of this work is October of 2008.

Apollo was experiencing difficulties with creating the proper mix of materials for concrete. In using local raw materials, yields of one ton of usable washed sand for every three tons of materials washed is not uncommon. Given the delays required for shipping the concrete mix to a lab in Kennewick, WA, for testing and ap-

roval, Apollo Construction will need to accelerate its work schedule once concrete pours actually get under way.

These portions of the WTP will require about 5,000 cubic yards of concrete, and tons of rebar, or reinforcing steel. Given the highly changeable weather patterns in the northeastern part of the state in the recent past, work on concrete pours through the winter could present a number of interesting challenges to Washington-State based Apollo Construction.



Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water Project Area

Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority

Dry Prairie is currently in the planning stages for construction projects on both the eastern and western sides of their service area.

The first two phases of construction have essentially maxed out the available capacity of the Town of Culbertson's Water Treatment Plant (WTP), from which Dry Prairie purchases water at wholesale rates and the sells to its customers. The WTP has an area available for a third filter bay, which was never installed. Dry Prairie is currently working on the details of a State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan to build that third filter bay. The increased capacity of the plant will then be used to sup-

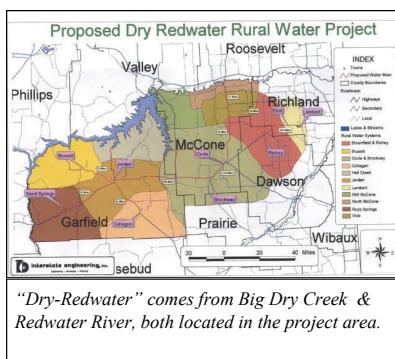
ply commercial and residential customers not presently being served by Dry Prairie. Plans are to proceed with that construction during 2008.

On the west side of the service area, Dry Prairie has been negotiating with Boeing Corporation to utilize unused capacity of the former Glasgow Air Force Base facility at the Town of Ste. Marie, north of Glasgow. Despite several delays, Dry Prairie and Boeing are now close to reaching agreement whereby Boeing will sell water to Dry Prairie in a manner similar to that being used with the Town of Culbertson. Then, depending upon the amount of

The former Glasgow Air Force Base is now MARCO, the Montana Aviation Research Company facility, owned by Boeing Corp.

Federal appropriations for Federal Fiscal Year 08, and availability of matching funds from the State of Montana's TSEP Regional Water Fund, work will proceed in several areas around Glasgow designed to bring water to both rural and municipal customers.

Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority



The Dry-Redwater Authority is waiting for receipt of a final draft version of the Federal bill to authorize the Dry-Redwater project. Given the passage of the Rural Water Supply Act by Congress at the end of 2006, and the Bureau of Reclamation's timetable for promulgation of rules called for by that Act (July 2008), if the Authority hasn't achieved project authorization by the end of the 110th Congress, notable shifts in their efforts will be required. At that point in time, it will be nec-

essary for the Authority to re-group, and to begin the process detailed in both the Rural Water Supply Act and the aforementioned rules, which will translate to at least 2 extra years' wait.

An environmental consulting firm has recently been selected by the Authority's Board for the purpose of conducting environmental baseline and wetlands studies in the corridor from the proposed intake to the water treatment plant, and then from the WTP to the Town of Circle.



North Central Montana Regional Water Authority

Member entities of the Authority are trying to come to grips with a variety of problems relating to their water supplies — inadequate quantities due to ongoing drought; water quality problems, made worse by drought conditions; and increased scrutiny from Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), due to violations of provisions of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA).

Hill County Water District (HCWD) is in the midst of a \$1.4 million construction project to improve their Marias River intake south of Inverness. After over 10 years of Boil Orders and other administrative actions brought by DEQ, HCWD will abandon its Fresno Reser-

voir intake on the Milk, and will utilize ultraviolet disinfection technology on the Marias water. They are currently dealing with high levels of Total Haloacetic Acids, resulting from efforts to maintain higher chlorine residuals throughout their network, using water from Fresno.

Many systems are experiencing problems. Brady had a backwash pump motor which needed replacement, and they are implementing a potassium permanganate process for control of disinfection byproducts. North Havre has had a Health Advisory re-issued by DEQ; they are facing serious compliance issues. South Chester has had some recent

problems with turbidity and occasional bacterial contamination. Devon is experiencing problems with turbidity levels, as well as elevated trihalomethanes, and an algae bloom in their raw water storage pond. Riverview Colony is attempting to segregate the portions of their system supplied by well water from those using infiltration galleries as a source. Several systems were under severe user restrictions in late summer, including Cut Bank, which would have run out of water from Cut Bank Creek if irrigation water had not been used to replenish the streamflows. The Town of Kevin is working on better surface protection measures for some of its springbox areas.

Chippewa-Cree Construction Corporation

The first phase of construction on the Core portion of the Rocky Boy's-North Central Montana regional water system is all but complete, and has come in on time and on budget. The Chippewa-Cree Construction Corporation an entity formed by the Chippewa-Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy's Reservation for the purpose of overseeing construction of tribal infrastructure, bid the first phase of the water intake facility (located at Tiber Dam) in Autumn of 2006.

The project for construction of the concrete caisson and the raw water intake micro-

tunneling was awarded to Michels Pipeline Construction, and initial work began in early September of 2006. Throughout the fall and winter months, crews constructed the wall sections of the caisson's vertical shaft, excavating under a metal cutting shoe placed below the lowermost wall section to gradually lower the completed sections into place. Total depth of the structure, including a 3-foot-thick base slab, is just under 75 feet.

Micro-tunneling under the floor of the reservoir from inside the vertical caisson for piping to the raw water intake pump location was



completed in June of 2007. All that remains to be completed on this project phase is the placement of fill materials around the upper end of the caisson. Congratulations to all!

Regional Water Authority Board Meeting Dates

Dry Prairie Rural Water Board meets at 7 P.M. on the first Thursday of each month. Most meetings take place in Wolf Point, and occasionally in Culbertson.

The Rocky Boy's—North Central Montana executive committee meets at 9:30 A.M. on the third Tuesday of each month. These are held in Great Falls, but once each quarter they are held in Shelby in conjunction with quarterly meetings of the Authority's Board.

Central Montana Regional Water Authority

has been meeting on the second Wednesday of each month. The meeting site rotates amongst seven member communities of the Authority.

Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority Board does not have a regular day and time set for their meetings, which are usually held in late afternoon or early evening. Board members are able to take advantage of ITV connections available at local schools and similar locations throughout the area, avoiding lengthy travel times. Next meeting is 5:30 PM

Monday, Nov. 19th (ITV).



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We're on the WWWeb —
www.dnrc.mt.gov

Two regional water systems in Montana have been authorized by Congress, and two others are advancing through planning and study phases. When complete, these systems will have a total construction price tag in excess of \$750 million (2008 dollars), and will serve more than 70,000 Montana residents. Whether current water supply problems in areas proposed to be served by regional systems are related to quantity, quality, or cost of treatment, regional systems will bring centralized treatment and distribution networks to communities, water districts and individuals which have struggled with these problems for decades.

Websites of Interest

North Central MT Authority — www.robong.org
Chippewa-Cree Construction Corp — www.ccconstcorp.com
Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority — www.nemontel.net/~dprw/
Dry-Redwater Regional Water — www.midrivers.com/~drwa/



Central Montana Regional Water Authority

Central Montana Regional Water Authority members have heard some good news and bad news the past few months, but the group is determined to stay the course to provide good and plentiful municipal water to eight communities.

After months of waiting, the authority received the good news in June that it has its water right on the Utica Test Well for 300 gallons per minute.

The other good news received in June was the approval by the Montana Legislature at its special session of the state budget that includes a line item appropriation in the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) budget for \$298,000 for the next biennium.

These funds will help CMRWA continue its

quest to inform state and federal politicians about the project and complete the appraisal report that should be finished by October. The appraisal report is being prepared by Great West Engineering of Helena and will consider at least one alternative and include project costs and design.

The bad news for CMRWA is that it will not receive a Federal Appropriation this year. The request has been submitted two years now and the group is gearing up to submit a third request in February to request funds to prepare a feasibility study, Environmental Assessment and Water Conservation Plan. These work items must be completed before the group can request a Congressional Authorization for construction funding.

At the CMRWA meeting in Hobson, commu-

nity representatives were urged to contact their state and federal legislators to ask them to support this project.

"They need to hear from individuals about the importance of this project," said Monty (Sealey). "Please get your emails and letters written and let's make sure they don't forget about us!"

For a list of addresses of all Montana and Washington, D.C., congressional offices, please contact Monty at 323-2755 or Carrie Mantooth, assistant coordinator at 535-2591.

This article originally appeared in the August 2007 newsletter of the Central Montana Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Area, Inc., P.O. Box 660, Roundup, MT. Reprinted by permission.